Chapter 18: Neighborhood Character

18.1 Introduction

This chapter assess the Proposed Actions' potential effects on neighborhood character. As defined in the *City Environmental Quality Review* (CEQR) *Technical Manual*, neighborhood character is an amalgam of various elements that give a neighborhood its distinct "personality." These elements may include a neighborhood's land use, socioeconomic conditions, open space, historic and cultural resources, urban design and visual resources, shadows, transportation, and/or noise conditions; but not all of these elements contribute to neighborhood character in all cases. For a proposed project or action, a neighborhood character under CEQR first identifies the defining features of the neighborhood and then evaluates whether the project or action has the potential to affect these defining features, either through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in relevant technical analysis areas. Thus, to determine the effects of a proposed action on neighborhood character, the salient features of neighborhood character are considered together. According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, neighborhood character impacts are rare, and it would be unusual that, in the absence of a significant adverse impact in any of the relevant technical areas, a combination of moderate effects to the neighborhood would result in an impact to neighborhood character. Moreover, a significant impact identified in one of the technical areas that contribute to a neighborhood's character is not automatically equivalent to a significant impact on neighborhood character, but rather serves as an indication that neighborhood character should be examined.

As outlined in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the Jerome Avenue Rezoning consists of a series of land use actions (collectively, the "Proposed Actions") intended to facilitate the implementation of the objectives of the *Jerome Avenue Neighborhood Plan*. The affected area comprises approximately 92 blocks extending primarily along the Jerome Avenue corridor and its east-west commercial corridors in Bronx Community Districts (CDs) 4, 5, and 7 within the neighborhoods of Highbridge, Concourse, Mount Eden, Morris Heights, Mount Hope, University Heights, and Fordham. The rezoning area is generally bounded by East 165th Street to the south and East 184th Street to the north and includes portions of Edward L. Grant Highway, E. 170th Street, Mount Eden Avenue, Tremont Avenue, Burnside Avenue, and E. 183rd Street. The Proposed Actions seek to create opportunities for new affordable housing and community facilities, including new parkland, establish requirements that a share of housing remain permanently affordable, diversify area retail, support small businesses and entrepreneurs, and promote a safe and walkable pedestrian realm.

In the 2026 Reasonable Worst-Case Development Scenario (RWCDS), the Proposed Actions are expected to facilitate the incremental development of 3,228 dwelling units (DUs), including 2,243 affordable DUs[1]; 20,866 sf of commercial uses[2]; 72,273 sf of community facility uses; and 217 accessory parking spaces; as well as a net reduction of 47,795 sf of industrial uses on the 45 identified projected development sites (compared to the No-Action condition).

This chapter includes a preliminary assessment of neighborhood character, which was prepared per the guidance of the *CEQR Technical Manual.* This chapter describes the defining features of the existing neighborhood character and considers the potential effects of the Proposed Actions on these defining features. This assessment relies on the technical analyses presented in other chapters of this EIS.

18.2 Principal Conclusions

The preliminary assessment conducted shows that the Proposed Actions would not result in a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character. The rezoning area and surrounding study area include parts of the following neighborhoods: Highbridge; Mount Eden; Concourse; Morris Heights; Mount Hope; University Heights; Fordham Heights; and Fordham Manor. All seven of these neighborhoods are dense, stable residential communities largely characterized by older multi-unit residential buildings. The Jerome Avenue corridor forms the area's central spine and physically divides the area with its automotive and service-related uses.

Per the guidance of the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the preliminary assessment evaluates the expected changes resulting from the Proposed Actions in the following technical areas: land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; open space; historic and cultural resources; urban design and visual resources; shadows; transportation; and noise. The assessment uses the findings from the respective chapters of this EIS to identify whether the Proposed Actions would result in any significant adverse impacts or moderate adverse effects in these technical areas, and whether any such changes would have the potential to affect the defining features of neighborhood character.

The Jerome Avenue study area is characterized by the presence of multiple neighborhoods, often physically separated by the Jerome Avenue corridor, which extends north-south and accommodates the elevated viaduct of the No. 4 subway line, as well as the Cross Bronx Expressway, an eight-lane, below-grade east-west roadway. While each neighborhood is generally residential in character, Jerome

[1] For CEQR analysis purposes, "affordable" refers to residential units set aside for households earning 80 percent or below of the Area Median Income (AMI).

[2] Commercial uses include retail, supermarket, restaurant, auto-related, hotel, office, storage, garage, and other commercial uses.

Avenue, with its low-density commercial uses, including garages, tire shops, and other automotive businesses, currently creates a disjointed character within the overall study area.

As described elsewhere in this EIS, the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts in the areas of land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; or urban design and visual resources. While some unmitigated significant adverse impacts would occur at several traffic intersections and at one pedestrian intersection, the resulting conditions would be similar to those seen in urban neighborhoods defining the study area and would not result in density of activity or service conditions that would be taken out of character with the surrounding neighborhoods. Thus, the changes in transportation due to the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts on neighborhood character. The Proposed Actions would not generate sufficient traffic to result in a significant adverse noise impact and the window/wall attenuation levels required under the (E) designations would avoid the potential for significant adverse noise impacts due to the Proposed Actions.

Therefore, based on the results of the preliminary assessment, a detailed assessment is not warranted, and the Proposed Actions would not have a significant adverse neighborhood character impact.

18.3 Methodology

Per the guidance of the *CEQR Technical Manual*, an assessment of neighborhood character is generally needed when a proposed action has the potential to result in significant adverse impacts in any of the following technical areas: land use, socioeconomic conditions, open space, historic and cultural resources, urban design and visual resources, shadows, transportation, or noise. The *CEQR Technical Manual* states that, even if a proposed action does not have the potential to result in a significant adverse impact in any specific technical area(s), an assessment of neighborhood character may be required if the project would result in a combination of moderate effects to several elements that may cumulatively affect neighborhood character. A "moderate" effect is generally defined as an effect considered reasonably close to the significant adverse impact threshold for a particular technical analysis area.

A preliminary assessment of neighborhood character determines whether changes expected in other technical analysis areas may affect a defining feature of neighborhood character. The preliminary assessment first identifies the defining features of the existing neighborhood character and then evaluates whether the proposed project or action has the potential to affect those defining features, either through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in the relevant technical areas. The key elements that define neighborhood character, and their relationships to one another, forms the basis of determining impact significance; in general, the more uniform and consistent the existing neighborhood context, the more sensitive it is to change. A neighborhood that

has a more varied context is typically able to tolerate greater change without experiencing significant impacts. If there is no potential for the proposed project or action to affect the defining features of neighborhood character, a detailed assessment is not warranted.

STUDY AREA

Per the guidance of the *CEQR Technical Manual,* the study area for a preliminary assessment of neighborhood character is typically consistent with the study areas in the relevant technical areas assessed under CEQR that contribute to the defining features of the neighborhood. In the context of an area-wide rezoning such as the Proposed Actions, the study area boundaries of the preliminary assessment of neighborhood character are generally coterminous with those used in the analyses of land use and urban design. The long, narrow, approximately two-mile-long rezoning area extending along the Jerome Avenue corridor and its east-west commercial corridors falls within several southwest Bronx neighborhoods. The study area for this assessment of neighborhood character comprises an area within an approximate ¼-mile radius of the rezoning area, which has been subdivided into the neighborhood subareas definitions that were used for Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy" and Chapter 8, " Urban Design and Visual Resources."

18.4 Preliminary Assessment

DEFINING FEATURES

The Jerome Avenue study area is characterized by the presence of multiple neighborhoods, often physically separated by the Jerome Avenue corridor, which extends north-south and accommodates the elevated viaduct of the No. 4 subway line, as well as the Cross Bronx Expressway, an eight-lane, below-grade east-west roadway. While each neighborhood is generally residential in character, Jerome Avenue, with its low-density commercial uses, including garages, tire shops, and other automotive businesses, currently creates a disjointed character within the overall study area.

For purposes of assessing neighborhood character, the study area is divided into seven neighborhoods ("subareas"): (1) Highbridge; (2) Mount Eden; (3) Concourse; (4) Morris Heights; (5) Mount Hope; (6) University Heights; (7) Fordham Heights; and (8) Fordham Manor (refer to Figure 2-3 in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy"). Each of these subareas is discussed separately in the following sections.

Highbridge

Highbridge takes its name from the landmarked High Bridge pedestrian crossing into Manhattan, which is the oldest standing bridge in the City that originally carried water from the Croton Aqueduct. High Bridge reopened to pedestrians in 2014, providing a connection from the Bronx neighborhood to Manhattan. The Highbridge subarea comprises the southwestern portion of the study area and is a hilly enclave. Its western edge is defined by a ridge extending along the Harlem River, the northern border by the Cross Bronx Expressway, its eastern edge by Edward L. Grant Highway, and East 161st Street to the south. The Highbridge subarea is largely defined by its hilly terrain, with elevations generally higher than those of the rezoning area, several steeply stepped streets, and an irregular street pattern that responds to the area's unique topography.

The Highbridge subarea is a largely residential area characterized by mid-rise five- to seven-story apartment buildings, as well as two-to four-family townhomes and pockets of single-family homes, most notably along Woodycrest Avenue. Some commercial and community facilities uses are also scattered throughout the neighborhood and along Ogden Avenue, the neighborhood's primary thoroughfare. The subarea also includes three NYCHA developments: Highbridge Gardens, Highbridge Rehab (Nelson Avenue) and Highbridge Rehab (Anderson Avenue). The Highbridge subarea (along with the Fordham Heights subarea) has experienced the greatest increase in median gross rent in the study area since 1999, with rent increases exceeding those of the Bronx or New York City as a whole. The Highbridge subarea has also experience the greatest level of population growth of the study area, increasing at a rate substantially greater than that of the Bronx or New York City as a whole.

The Highbridge subarea is less transit accessible than the remaining study area neighborhoods, with no subway stations located within the subarea. However, there are several bus lines that traverse the subarea, including the BX13 local bus, which travels along Ogden Avenue, the BX18, which runs along Undercliff Avenue, and the BX11 and Bx35, which run along Edward L. Grant Highway.

The Cross Bronx Expressway, which forms the northern border of the subarea clearly separates the Highbridge neighborhood from the neighborhood of Morris Heights, to the north. Constructed between 1943 and 1963, this eight-lane, below-grade, now-defining physical characteristic of the study area caused massive displacement and bisected formerly tight knit, thriving communities. The Cross Bronx Expressway now serves as a physical divide, limiting access between Highbridge and the Morris Heights neighborhood to the north. The Cross Bronx Expressway is also notable for its heavy truck traffic and is one of the most congested corridors in the City. As presented in Chapter 16, "Noise," monitored existing noise levels in the Highbridge subarea are "marginally unacceptable."

Mount Eden

The Mount Eden neighborhood lies to the east of Highbridge and is generally bounded by the Cross Bronx Expressway to the north, Edward L. Grant Highway to the west, and Jerome Avenue and Grand Concourse to the east. Due to the neighborhood's existing zoning, particularly along Jerome Avenue, which forms the central north-south spine of the neighborhood, the area is characterized by a mix of self-storage, an ironworks, a DSNY facility, a number of automotive and warehouse uses, automotive repair facilities, and parking uses. While one of the most transit-rich neighborhoods of the study area, Mount Eden is currently disjointed in character due to the existing character of Jerome Avenue.

Jerome Avenue, which extends through the core of the neighborhood, is characterized by the presence of the elevated No. 4 train, which runs along the entire length of the avenue that traverses the subarea. In general, Jerome Avenue is one of the most congested corridors of the study area, acting as a divider between the eastern and western portions of the subarea, as well as the eastern and western portions of the greater neighborhood character study area, due both to its congested character and land use mix. The northern border of the subarea (where Jerome Avenue meets the Cross Bronx Expressway access ramps) is characterized by particularly congested traffic conditions. As noted in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," while the greater Mount Eden neighborhood is residential in character, Jerome Avenue, in addition to Cromwell and Inwood avenues, are comprised of more auto-oriented uses, including auto repair facilities, gas stations, livery service accessories, and tire shops, with industrial uses also found along Inwood Avenue.

170th Street, which serves as a major east-west spine of the subarea is an important lateral connection throughout the study area between Edward L. Grant Highway on the west and Grand Concourse on the east. The 170th Street commercial corridor is one of the most active commercial areas in the study area. Generally speaking, uses are locally-serving and located in low-scale one- and two-story buildings. Along the northern frontage of 170th Street between Walton and Jerome avenues are a number of larger, mixed-use apartment buildings with ground floor retail. Auto-oriented uses, including surface parking and a livery cab service, in addition to self-storage, are also found along 170th Street. 170th Street is also a designated "Priority Corridor" of DOT's Pedestrian Safety Action Plan.

As noted above, the Mount Eden neighborhood is well-served by public transit, with the No. 4 subway line running along Jerome Avenue. There are three subway stations within the subarea: the 170th Street and Mount Eden Avenue stations (both located along Jerome Avenue and served by the No. 4 line) and the 170th Street (B/D) station, located on Grand Concourse, along the subarea's eastern border. In addition to these subway stations, the Bx11 and Bx18 bus lines, which run along East 170th Street, make this one of the study area's more transit-rich nodes. As explained in Chapter 13, "Transportation," several intersections in the Mount Eden neighborhood have congested lane groups during peak hours. As presented in Chapter 16, "Noise," monitored existing noise levels in the Mount Eden neighborhood range from "marginally acceptable" to "clearly unacceptable."

Concourse

Concourse comprises the southeastern portion of the study area and is generally bounded by the Cross Bronx Expressway to the north, Webster Avenue to the east, East 161st Street to the south, and the Grand Concourse and Jerome Avenue to the west. The primary defining feature of the Concourse neighborhood is the Grand Concourse, itself, which is described in greater detail below, as well as the presence of several large open space resources along its borders.

The Grand Concourse, a 180-foot-wide boulevard that runs along the western border of the subarea north of E. Clarke Place and through the center of the subarea to the south, is a defining feature of the Concourse neighborhood. The boulevard, which is a designated Historic District, is consistent in design, lined with many apartment buildings similar in bulk, height, and arrangement. The Grand Concourse features a number of Art Deco residential buildings, and the roadway itself is comprised of a mainline and service roads separated by raised medians. The Grand Concourse is also the primary public transit corridors, with two B/D stations located along the roadway within the subarea (the 167th Street and 170th Street stations), in addition to being a designated "Priority Corridor" of DOT's Bronx Pedestrian Safety Action Plan. The 167th Street (4) station is also located within the subarea along its western border. As explained in Chapter 13, "Transportation," several intersections in the Concourse neighborhood have congested lane groups during peak hours. As presented in Chapter 16, "Noise," monitored existing noise levels along the corridor range from "marginally unacceptable" to "clearly unacceptable."

The Concourse neighborhood primarily consists of multi-family residential buildings, large institutional uses, and several open space uses. While still lower income than the Bronx and the City as a whole, the Concourse subarea has the highest median and mean household income of the study area neighborhoods and the lowest percentage of persons below the poverty level (though still higher than the Bronx and New York City as a whole). The population of Concourse has increased slightly in recent years, and is expected to continue to increase in the future without the Proposed Actions, with just under 1,800 new residents expected in the subarea as a result of planned and anticipated development in the 2026 No-Action condition.

Institutional uses are located primarily to the east of the Grand Concourse and include Bronx Lebanon Hospital Center and Surgery Center, Mount Gilead Baptist Church, P.S. 70, Bronx High School of Business, Sheridan Academy for Young Leaders, the Bronx Museum of the Arts at 1040 Grand Concourse, and Mid-Bronx CCRP Headstart. There is a high number of mixed-use buildings (residential/commercial) located within this neighborhood, with the majority located on or within close proximity to the Grand Concourse. There are also several other mixed-use buildings located on East 171st Street, Elliot Place, and E. Clarke Place. The Concourse neighborhood is also characterized by the greatest concentration of taller (seven- to 12-story) buildings.

As noted above, the character of the Concourse subarea is also defined by several large parks, including the 7.71-acre Crotona Park and 3.85-acre Grant Park, which border the neighborhood to the east, and the 15-acre park Mullaly Park, which is located in the southern portion of the neighborhood. The 38-acre Crotona Park is partially located within the subarea, east of Grand Concourse and south of the Mt. Eden Parkway. Yankee Stadium is also located within the Concourse neighborhood (along its southern border).

Morris Heights

Morris Heights extends along the Harlem River in the West Bronx, and is generally bounded by West Burnside Avenue to the north, Jerome Avenue to the east, and the Cross Bronx Expressway to the south. Similar to the Highbridge and University Heights neighborhood subareas, Morris Heights has a hilly terrain with stair streets serving to connect areas located at different elevations. However, the Cross Bronx Expressway provides a clear point of physical delineation between the Morris Heights neighborhood and the neighborhoods of Highbridge and Mount Hope to the south. The Morris Heights neighborhood is largely characterized by its residential and sociodemographic character.

Morris Heights' residential housing stock is comprised of five- and six-story residential apartment buildings, older multi-unit homes, and newly constructed subsidized attached multi-unit townhouses and apartment buildings. This neighborhood contains one of the highest concentrations of NYCHA projects in the Bronx, with most housing requiring prospective tenants to meet income restrictions. Partially due to this concentration of income-restricted units, the Morris Heights subarea has the lowest median and mean household incomes of the study area, as well as the highest percentage of persons below the poverty level.

Burnside Avenue, which forms the northern border of the subarea, offers a small lively commercial strip. Apparel stores, restaurants, banks, electronic stores, grocery stores, and other commercial uses are typical along the thoroughfare. Commercial uses are also found along Tremont, University, and Jerome Avenues, although, as noted above, the neighborhood is predominantly residential in character. Burnside and University avenues are also designated local truck route, in addition to having significant pedestrian volumes.

The two subway stations located within the subarea are both located along the subarea's eastern border (Jerome Avenue). Apart from these two subway stations, public transit in the Morris Heights neighborhood is limited to the Morris Heights MetroNorth station, which is located approximately 1,000 feet west of the subarea's western border, and several local bus routes, including the Bx3, the Bx18, and the Bx36. Several of the study area's bus routes provide connections to Manhattan via the Washington Bridge, located at the southwest corner of the subarea. As explained in Chapter 13, "Transportation," one intersection in the Morris Heights neighborhood has congested lane groups during peak hours.

Burnside Avenue, is the most vibrant commercial corridor in the northern portion of the study area.

Mount Hope

Mount Hope in located in the central portion of the study area and is generally bounded by East Burnside Avenue to the north, the Cross Bronx Expressway to the south, Jerome Avenue to the west, and Webster Avenue to the east. The Grand Concourse extends roughly through the center of the neighborhood. While the Grand Concourse extends through the Concourse neighborhood to the south, as well, the Cross Bronx Expressway provides a clear delineation between these two neighborhoods. The Mount Hope neighborhood is also differentiated from the Concourse neighborhood by its greater variety in housing stock.

While recently experiencing a decrease in population, Mount Hope is still a largely residential area consisting of multi-family residential buildings, as well as one- and two-family residences located along Townsend and Morris avenues. There are limited commercial uses in the subarea, which area primarily located along Jerome, East Burnside, and East Tremont avenues, as well as the southern end of the Grand Concourse. Open spaces within this subarea are limited to smaller neighborhood parks, including Mount Hope Garden, Devanney Triangle, Richman (Echo) Park, Echo Triangle, Mount Hope Playground, Townsend Garden, Cleopatra Playground, and Peace Park. Two larger institutional uses (St. Margaret Mary's School and P.S. 117) are located within this neighborhood, as well as several smaller institutional uses, including Pilgrim Congregation Church, Tremont Presbyterian Church, Fountain Spring Baptist Church, and Tremont Monterey Daycare.

The Grand Concourse, which serves as the central spine of the neighborhood (similar to the Concourse and Fordham Heights neighborhoods to the south and north, respectively), is also the primary public transit corridor, with two B/D subway stations located within the subarea: the 174th-175th Street station and the Tremont Avenue station. Two No. 4 subway stations are also located along the portion of Jerome Avenue that forms the western border of the subarea. It should be noted that, unlike the portion of the Grand Concourse that is located within the Concourse neighborhood, the portion of the thoroughfare that traverses the Mount Hope neighborhood is not part of a designated historic district. As explained in Chapter 13, "Transportation," several intersections in the Mount Hope neighborhood have congested lane groups during peak hours. As presented in Chapter 16, "Noise," monitored existing noise levels along this portion of the subarea from "marginally unacceptable" to "clearly unacceptable."

The intersection of Grand Concourse with Burnside Avenue is a particularly congested intersection. Other congested intersections in the area include the intersection of Grand Concourse and East Tremont Avenue and the intersection of Jerome Avenue and the Cross Bronx Expressway access ramp (at the southwestern corner of the subarea).

University Heights

University Heights is perched on a hill that offers views of northern Manhattan. It comprises the northwestern portion of the study area, bounded by West Fordham Road to the north, West Burnside

Avenue to the south, Jerome Avenue to the east, and the Harlem River to the west. University Avenue is the neighborhood's primary thoroughfare and is also a designated local truck route. The University Heights subarea is characterized by the presence of several significant institutional uses and the Aqueduct Walk, an open space and designated historic district that runs through the center of the subarea.

While University Heights is largely a residential area that consists of one- and two-family, as well as multi-family, residential buildings occupying small lots, a key defining feature of the University Heights neighborhood is the 45-acre Bronx Community College, which is generally bounded by 180th Street, University Avenue, Sedgewick Avenue, and Hall of Fame Terrace. University Heights' development was spurred in part by the opening of Bronx Community College, which influenced the form and function of the buildings seen today around the campus along University Avenue. Bronx Community College is part of the City University of New York (CUNY) and serves a largely commuter student population. Stanford White designed many of the college's buildings, and much of the College campus has been designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL). St. Nicholas of Tolentine's Church is another prominent landmark on West Fordham Road at University Avenue.

Although open space is more limited in this neighborhood, the Aqueduct Walk extends through this neighborhood subarea along the right-of-way of the former Croton Aqueduct (approximately a half a block east of University Avenue) and is a defining feature of the neighborhood. The Croton Aqueduct system is an S/NR-listed historic landmark. For more of its length, the aqueduct is underground and the right-of-way is cleared land with native grass and a narrow worn dirt footpath.

Similar to the other neighborhood subareas, most residents of University Heights are renters. Much of the housing stock consists of older subsidized apartment buildings and includes Section 8 subsidized housing or single-room occupancy units. There are pockets of single-family homes on West 179th Street, and a handful of cooperative apartments on Grand and Davidson avenues. Some market-rate development, including River Hill Gardens (a five-story brick residential complex on Sedgwick Avenue) and seven-story brick apartment buildings directly north of Bronx Community College, are located in the neighborhood.

The elevated No. 4 subway follows Jerome Avenue on the University Heights eastern border, and there are two subway stops within the subarea: 183rd Street and Fordham Road. As explained in Chapter 13, "Transportation," one intersection in the University Heights neighborhood has congested lane groups during peak hours. As presented in Chapter 16, "Noise," monitored existing noise levels range from "marginally unacceptable" to "clearly unacceptable."

Fordham Heights

The Fordham Heights subarea extends from East Burnside Avenue to the south, Jerome Avenue to the west, East Fordham Road to the north, and (generally) Tiebout Avenue to the east. The Fordham Heights

neighborhood is distinguished from the other study area subareas by its greater presence of commercial and mixed-use buildings, many of which line the Grand Concourse, East Fordham Road, and East 188th Street.

Fordham Heights is well-served by public transportation with subway stations for the No. 4 subway line along Jerome Avenue at Burnside Avenue, 183rd Street, and Fordham Road, and subway stations for the B and D subway lines along the Grand Concourse at 182nd-183rd Street and Fordham Road. The Fordham Heights neighborhood is also traversed by East 181st Street, a major corridor with significant pedestrian volumes. As explained in Chapter 13, "Transportation," one intersection in the Fordham Heights neighborhood has congested lane groups during peak hours.

The Fordham Heights subarea (along with the Highbridge subarea) has also experienced the greatest increase in median gross rent in the study area since 1999, with rent increases exceeding those of the Bronx or New York City as a whole.

Portions of the Fordham Heights subarea are considered "underserved" by open space. As such, open space is not a defining feature of the subarea.

Fordham Manor

A small portion of the Fordham Manor neighborhood is located within the study area, located to the north of Fordham Road and comprising the northern tip of the study area. Within the study area, this neighborhood is largely characterized by a dense mix of commercial uses, including a variety of retail uses, concentrated along Fordham Road, with multi-family residential uses lining the north-south street to the north of this commercial corridor. The Fordham Road subway station, which serves the No. 4 subway line, is also located along this busy corridor at the intersection of Jerome Avenue. Fordham Road is a designated "Priority Corridor" of DOT's Pedestrian Safety Action Plan. As explained in Chapter 13, "Transportation," one intersection in the Fordham Manor neighborhood has congested lane groups during peak hours.

Portions of the Fordham Manor subarea are considered "underserved" by open space. As such, open space is not a defining feature of the subarea.

ASSESSMENT OF THE POTENTIAL TO AFFECT THE DEFINING FEATURES OF THE NEIGHBORHOODS

The sections below discuss potential changes resulting from the Proposed Actions in the following technical areas that are considered in the neighborhood character assessment per the guidance of the *CEQR Technical Manual*: land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; open space;

historic and cultural resources; urban design and visual resources; shadows; transportation; and noise. The assessment uses the findings from the respective chapters of this EIS to identify whether the Proposed Actions would result in any significant adverse impacts or moderate adverse effects in these technical areas and whether any such changes would have the potential to affect the defining features of neighborhood character. As described below, defining features of the primary study area's constituent neighborhoods would not be affected either through the potential of any significant adverse impact or combination of moderate effects in these technical areas.

Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy

Defining features of the neighborhoods would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on land use, zoning, and public policy, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As presented in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the Proposed Actions would not result in a significant adverse impact on land use, zoning, and public policy. Jerome Avenue's current mix of land uses, characterized by the concentrated presence of low-rise auto-oriented uses, are out of character with the greater residential context of the surrounding neighborhoods. The mix of residential, commercial, and community facility uses that would be facilitated by the Proposed Actions would serve to bridge the current divide that exists between the residential cores of the neighborhoods to the east and west of the corridor, thereby improving the overall character of the study area's neighborhoods.

Socioeconomic Conditions

Defining features of the neighborhoods would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on socioeconomic conditions, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As presented in Chapter 3, "Socioeconomic Conditions," the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts on socioeconomic conditions. While the Proposed Actions and associated RWCDS could potentially displace 77 businesses and an estimated 584 jobs associated with those businesses, these 77 businesses do not represent a majority of study area businesses or employment for any given sector; as such, their displacement would not change the overall character of the neighborhoods. While the greater South Bronx has experienced a dramatic increase in investment and development over the last two decades, development in the rezoning area had remained largely static and stagnant due to the area's existing zoning. The Proposed Actions would create new development opportunities along major corridors that currently contain few residential units, but have the capacity for significant growth. The proposed zoning districts would permit residential development in areas where it is not currently permitted and would increase residential density in areas where it is already permitted. Lastly, as the study area neighborhoods have well-established residential and commercial uses and markets, the Proposed Actions would not add a new economic activity or add to a concentration of a particular sector of the

local economy enough to significantly alter or accelerate existing economic patterns or the character of the neighborhoods.

Open Space

Defining features of the neighborhoods would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on open space, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As presented in Chapter 5, "Open Space," the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse open space impacts. Within the ¼-mile neighborhood character study area, the passive open space ratio would increase in the 2026 With-Action condition, as compared to No-Action conditions and would remain well above the City's guideline passive open space ratios. While the greater ½-mile open space study area would experience a decrease in open space ratios, compared to the No-Action condition, with the ratios expected to remain below the City's optimal open space ratio planning goals, portions of the rezoning area and surrounding study area are already in an area that is designated as "underserved" by open space. As such, the decrease in the open space ratios would not result in a change to the character of the neighborhood.

Shadows

Defining features of the neighborhoods would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on shadows, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As presented in Chapter 6, "Shadows," the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse shadow impacts on historic and cultural resources; however the Proposed Actions would result in significant adverse shadow impacts on eight study area resources: the Bronx School of Young Leaders, P.S. 306 Schoolyard, Mount Hope Playground, Goble Playground, Inwood Park, Keltch Park, Edward L. Grant Greenstreet, and the Jerome Avenue/Grant Avenue Greenstreet. As described in Chapter 5, "Open Space," the neighborhoods along the Jerome Avenue corridor include numerous publicly accessible open spaces, including parks and playgrounds, Greenstreets, and several community gardens, though the open space resources are generally within the broader study areas inventoried and analyzed, rather than characterizing the rezoning area itself. Thus, the reach of shadows resulting from new development that would occur within the rezoning area would also be limited with regard to the extent shadow effects could alter the neighborhoods' open spaces. The eight open space resources that would experience significant adverse shadows impacts with the Proposed Actions are distributed throughout the rezoning area and do not represent character-defining features of the rezoning area, nor do they contribute substantially to the inventory and character of the neighborhoods' open spaces. Further, as described in Chapter 5, "Open Space," some of these open space resources that would experience significant adverse shadow impacts are utilized at only "low" or "moderate" levels, and Inwood Park is currently in "unacceptable" condition. Overall, the significant adverse shadow impacts to open spaces would represent isolated impacts that would not

constitute wholesale or adverse change to the character of the neighborhoods, and so the Proposed Actions would result in no significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character, as related to shadows.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on historic and cultural resources, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As presented in Chapter 7, "Historic and Cultural Resources," the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse impacts on historic and cultural resources, and therefore would not be expected to alter these features of neighborhood character.

Urban Design and Visual Resources

Defining features of the neighborhoods would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on urban design and visual resources, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As presented in Chapter 8, "Urban Design and Visual Resources," the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts on urban design and visual resources. Rather, the Proposed Actions would result in positive effects to urban design in the study area. As noted above, Jerome Avenue currently serves as an anomaly in the overall character of the study area, with a concentrated presence of low-rise auto-oriented uses, which are out of character in the greater residential context of the surrounding neighborhoods. The Proposed Actions would change the urban design of the rezoning area, facilitating the development of new buildings that would be consistent in density, height, and use, thereby contributing to the ongoing development of a coherent, consistent, and appropriate streetscape.

Transportation

Defining features of the neighborhoods would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Action on transportation, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As described in Chapter 13, "Transportation," the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts on subway demand or parking availability. The Proposed Actions would result in significant adverse traffic, bus, and pedestrian impacts. With the implementation of bus mitigation measures outlined in Chapter 21, "Mitigation," the identified significant adverse transit impacts would be fully mitigated. Two of the three identified pedestrian impacts would be fully mitigated; however, as outlined in Chapter 21, the northeast corner of East 167th Street and Jerome Avenue (in the Concourse neighborhood) would remain unmitigated. While most of the identified significant adverse traffic impacts would be fully mitigated, as outlined in Chapter 21, three lane groups at two intersections during the weekday AM peak hour, three lane groups at two intersections during the midday peak hour, 18 lane groups at nine intersections during the weekday PM

peak hour, and nine lane groups at five intersections during the Saturday midday peak hour would remain unmitigated. These unmitigated impacts would generally occur at intersections along existing heavily trafficked roadways, specifically along Jerome Avenue, Kingsbridge Road, Fordham Road, Burnside Avenue, East 167th Street, Grand Concourse, Burnside Avenue, Tremont Avenue, and Mt. Eden Avenue.

The intersections at which these unmitigated traffic impacts would occur are generally characterized by high levels of traffic in the existing conditions. While there would be increased transportation activity as a result of the Proposed Actions, the resulting conditions would be similar to those seen in urban neighborhoods defining the study area and would not result in density of activity or service conditions that would be taken out of character with the surrounding neighborhoods. Thus, the changes in transportation due to the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts on neighborhood character.

Noise

Defining features of the neighborhoods would not be adversely affected due to potential noise effects of the Proposed Actions, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As described in Chapter 16, "Noise," at all noise receptor sites, the maximum noise level increase would be 1.4 dBA, which would not be considered a significant adverse noise impact. The noise analysis concludes that the traffic generated by the Proposed Actions would not have the potential to produce significant increases to noise levels at any sensitive receptors within the rezoning area. The Proposed Actions include (E) designations for all the projected and potential development sites; the window/wall attenuation levels required would avoid the potential for significant adverse noise impacts. Therefore, the anticipated increases in noise levels in the rezoning area would not constitute a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character.